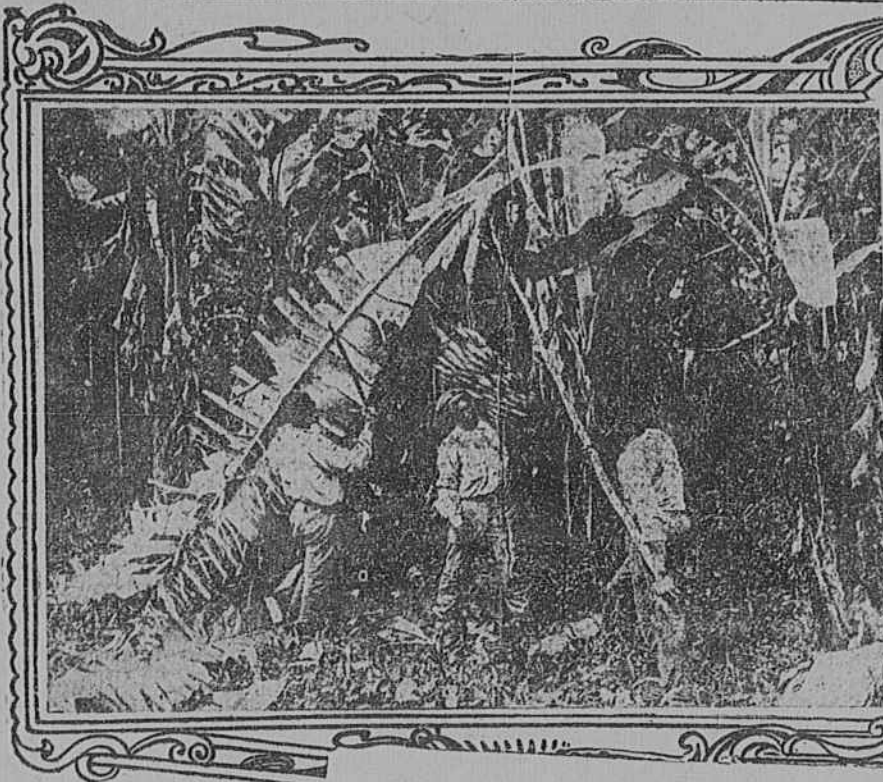


In Banana Land--One of the World's Biggest Plantations



"The cutting is done by no grocer skilled in the business."

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Changuinola, Panama. I AM writing this in the center of one of the biggest banana plantations on earth. The hill on which I am sitting is 300 feet high and it commands a view of more than 15,000 acres of the greenest of green. The green is all made up of banana and the fields stretch as far as I can see to the west. Beyond them is another plantation of 20,000 acres more. The two plantations belong to the banana trust, known as the United Fruit Company, and they are only a part of the mighty estate which this company owns in Central and South America and in the islands of the Caribbean Sea. It has taken up about the best banana lands of these sections and it annually ships bananas by the hundreds of millions. From its farms come something like three-fourths of all the bananas we use, and it is due to its good business methods that we are able to buy this fruit much cheaper than the apples we raise in our own back yards. Bananas from Panama are sold in New York, Washington and Chicago at from 15 to 20 cents a dozen, whereas apples of equal excellence from Oregon, New York or Virginia bring 2 cents and upward apiece.

A Sea of Bananas.

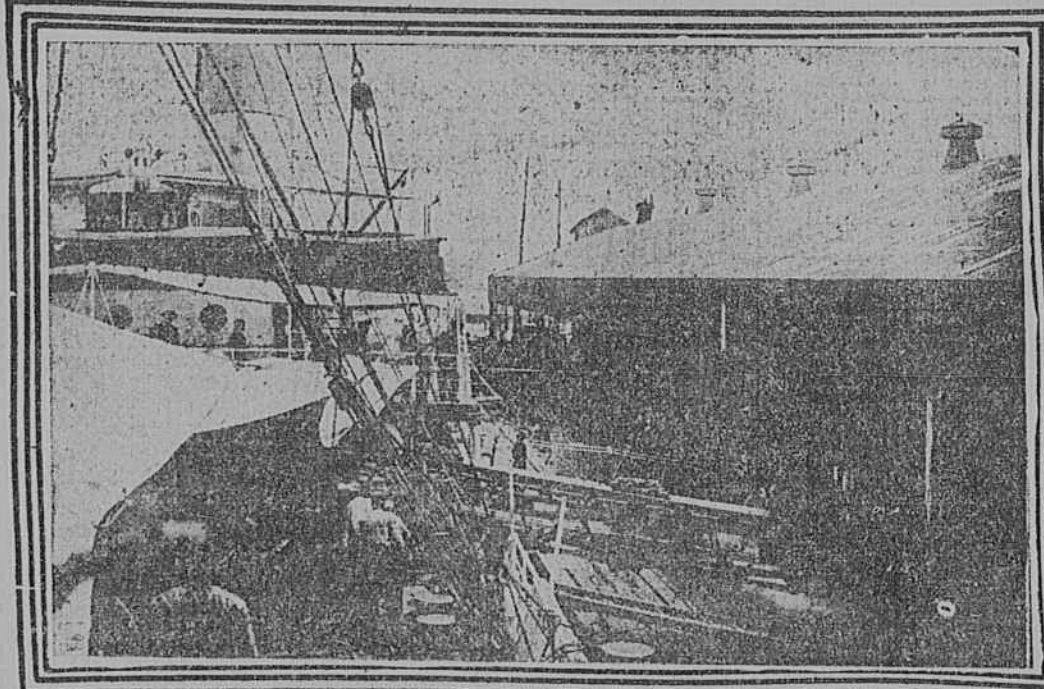
But as to the extent of the banana business and the part that this fruit has in the American stomach, I shall write later. Let me give you a view of the great banana sea as it is spread below me. At my right are the mountains, the upper end of the Andes, which at this point are about as high as the Blue Ridge and of much the same color. They slope down to the green and bound what is a

look, seems a vast sea of green bushes. Now turn and look to the left. The sea of green extends for fifteen miles in that direction without a break, and it is the same at the front and the back. Almost as far as you can see there is green everywhere, except here and there where one of the high trees of the jungle was too big for cutting. Now take your glass and look more closely at the plantations below you. The green is not solid. You can see that it is divided up into great fields or farms, each of which contains about a thousand acres, and that there are narrow lines of railroads running through it, with wagon roads here and there. Those roads were built to get out the bananas. There are 170 miles of railways on this banana plantation, and they run through the farms like the veins of one's body, reaching all parts. The roads are about three feet wide. With a glass you can see the steel tracks shining out of the green. On some of the roads are cars loaded with green bunches, and on the trunk line which crosses the estate are piles of bananas corded up for the trains.

How Bananas Are Handled.

Now take a look at that train which is approaching the hill. See, it has stopped and is taking on fruit. The gang of Jamaica Negroes is transferring the piles to the cars. They handle the fruit very carefully. The cars have been lined with leaves to prevent bruising the bananas as the train goes over the rails. Each bunch is lifted up into the air and passed from hand to hand to the men on the train. There is no throwing or dropping the bunches. Each is raised as tenderly as though it were a baby, and is laid softly down on the car. The

LOADING BANANAS.

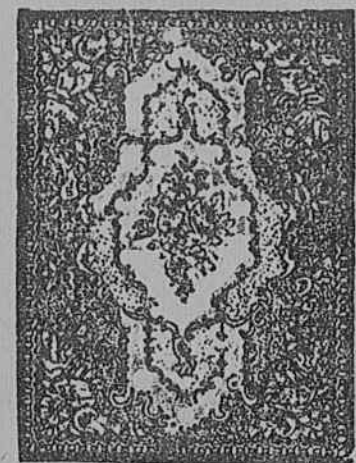


"THE BANANAS GO FROM THE CARS TO THE STEAMERS ON ENDLESS BELTS."

SPECIAL

Week Sept. 9th.

Carpets, Rugs, Mattings and Linoleums



September is the month of Carpets and Rugs, either for the new home or in preparation for the on-coming winter months. Our stock is most complete, and we cordially invite you to inspect the collection, whether you purchase or not. Our window display will give you some idea of the assortment presented, and the following list of special price offerings will indicate the savings to be made in this department:

8x10 1/2 ft. Extra Quality Tapestry Brussels Rug \$11.75
9x10 1/2 ft. Extra Quality Tapestry Brussels Rug \$12.75
9x12 ft. Extra Quality Tapestry Brussels Rug \$13.75
9x12 Bungalow Wool and Fibre Rug \$9.85
9x12 Extra Quality Velvet Rug \$18.50
9x12 Body Brussels Rug \$26.75
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A full line of Carpets, Inlaid and Printed Linoleums, Oilcloths, Mattings, etc.
All Floor Coverings Laid Free of Charge.

Future Delivery

Purchase your floor coverings for the new home now and we will hold them for future delivery when the home is ready.

Furniture News

Parlor and Library Furniture

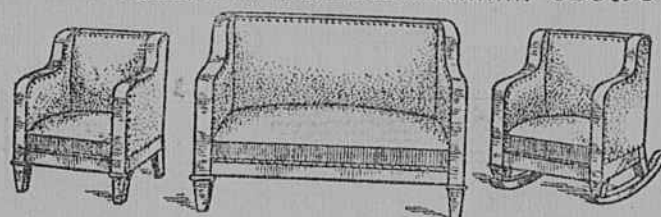
Our stock of Parlor and Library Furniture is more complete this year than ever before. In the collection will be found handsome specimens of the various period styles. Both the Parlor and Library Furniture is adapted in appearance to the purposes intended. The delicate and more ornate furniture for the parlor and the massive, sturdy furniture for the library. Each creates the proper atmosphere in the room. Many single pieces will be found in addition to the matched suites. All are of correct and artistic design, well made and durable. Special price reductions have been made on the following for this week only:

4 Piece Mission Style Library Suite

(Settee, Arm Chair, Rocker and Side Chair). This suite is designed along massive lines, roomy and comfortable. Seats are upholstered in chaise leather. Regularly \$25.00. SPECIAL AT..... \$13.95

3 PIECE PARLOR SUITE

Frames are made of mahoganyized birch, highly polished and so finished as to show to best advantage the beautiful grain of the wood. Upholstered in green plush; either loose seats tied with cord or the built up style. SPECIAL AT..... \$18.75



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Come in and let us demonstrate the New Method Ranges and explain the many exclusive features.

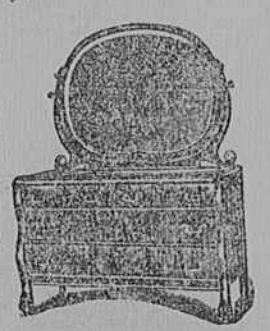


Beautiful Furniture for the Bed Room

The assortment of Bedroom Furniture runs from suites in reproductions of period designs of extremely fine workmanship to single pieces, which, though low in price, are of excellent construction. The variety is extraordinary.

Dressers like that illustrated, simple but beautiful in design and made of the various woods. Beds, Chiffoniers, Toilet Tables, Washstands, Bureaus, etc., single and in matched sets and in the various woods—Mahogany, Circassian Walnut, Quartered Oak, Bird's-eye Maple, etc.

The prices are very low, and you are assured of obtaining the best quality, no matter what your purchase may be.



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"There are 170 miles of railroad on this banana plantation."

years, without replanting, and at the end the yield was quite as great as at first.

Cutting the Fruit.

Now, let us stop and watch them cutting fruit. This requires skill. The bananas must not fall on the ground, as the slightest bruise will make them unfit for shipping. The cutting is done by negroes, who are skilled in the business. They use long lances with sharp steel blades, and cut half way through the stem at one stroke. This makes the bunch fall, and the cutter catches it as it gently drops down. He now cuts off the rest of the stem, and the bunch is handed to the men who carry it off to the cars.

I suppose it makes your mouth water to think of eating a banana fresh from the tree. Such a banana would surely cause colic. The fruit ripens best by being cut green, and on all the banana and acre I cannot see a single yellow banana. It is only at the ports that I have been able to get fruit to eat. The green bananas will keep two or three weeks after cutting, and if cut at the right time they taste better by being allowed to ripen on the way to the markets.

Six Thousand Workmen.

Many people think that there is but little labor in raising bananas. There was a greater mistake. When the United Fruit Company took up these thousands of acres, they were covered with a jungle as dense as that on the slopes of the Himalaya mountains. The ground was covered with mighty trees, some of which were 100 feet high. These trees were bound together with vines and lianas, which were matted together and formed a network of woven vegetation. There were palms of a score of varieties, and the mass of green was so dense that you could only cut your way through with a knife and an axe. All of this jungle had to be cut down and turned over. The big trees, some of which were as large around as a flour barrel, and some had even the diameter of a hoghead, were left to rot where they fell.

After the land was cleared and burned over, the plants had to be set out at 200 hills to the acre. They had to be kept clean of weeds, and this, notwithstanding their nature here, is so generous that if the land is left free for six months it will be jungle again.

And then some of the lands were swampy and they had to be ditched. The rainfall here is ten inches a month, or 120 inches a year, and the banana tree will not grow with its feet in the water. In some other banana plantations the land is so dry that irrigation is needed, but here the plants are just right. In planning the plantation, roads and railroads were built, and they go out from them to their labor. The officials and foremen are whites, and the responsible parts of the work are done by Americans sent here from the United States. They are the best of their kind, and they receive excellent wages. The negroes are paid about the same that the Jamaicans receive on the Panama Canal, and their labor is about as efficient.

A great deal of the work is done by the blacks, and the man gets so much for clearing, so much for planting and cleaning and so much for picking the fruit. As it is now it costs about \$20 per acre to clear the land, and the managers can tell you just how much every plant costs. They have cost sheets like those of a great factory and can tell to the tenth of a cent the outlay spent on each bunch of bananas and where every cent goes. It is only by such methods that bananas can be sold at the prices they bring in the States and still give a profit.

The whole business is one of petty economies, which in the aggregate mean a saving of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Not a Whittling Business.

As I walked through the hills and watched the great green bunches being cut by the hundreds and carried off to the cars, I asked one of the foremen if there would not be big money for an American to come here and start a rival fruit trust, and whether a man with a small amount of money could not engage in the business at a profit. He replied:

"It might seem so if you did not know the facts. The truth is that this is no whittling business. You have got to have a big capital and enough to take care of all kinds of accidents. Sometimes a disease will wipe out a plantation, and again a storm blow up and we lose the whole crop. Just a few months ago we had a hurricane here which destroyed 180,000 bunches of

bananas in the space of five minutes. That happens every now and then, and if the property was that of a small farmer it would mean total ruin. A big concern like this can stand it on account of the profit it receives from its other plantations. As it is now there are many small plantations, but they sell their bananas to us. We pay them 28 cents a bunch, and at that they can do very well. Nevertheless, the total product of such men about here is only 2,000 bunches a week, which is a bagatelle in comparison with the 100,000 bunches we ship during that time. As to a rival trust, that might succeed, but it needs good lands and a fleet of ships and also good marketing facilities in the United States."

One hundred thousand bunches a week. The men utter these words as though they meant nothing. Nevertheless, they were astonishing to me. Have you any idea what 100,000 bunches a week means? It means 5,200,000 bunches of bananas a year, for the banana business goes on all the year through.

A single bunch contains 150 bananas, and from this place alone they are sending forth something like 750,000,000 per annum. We have 100,000,000 Alaska and the Philippine Islands. These plantations could give every one of us seven bananas and have 50,000,000 to spare. It could give thirty-five to every family. But this is only one of the United Fruit Company. The banana trust has scores of others, and it ships from Costa Rica almost double as many bananas as from here. It ships a vast deal from Cartagena, and it is building up in Guatemala big plantations, and it is going to visit within the next few months. The business is increasing and the demand for bananas is increasing as well.

The United States is now using 60,000,000 bunches of bananas every twelve months, or about 300,000,000 bunches a year. You can now get a good banana for a cent or two at most anywhere in our country, and the business has to be big in order to pay.

I am told that it pays well. It pays not only the capitalists who handle it, but also the country where the bananas are grown. It is one of the chief of revenue of the treasuries of Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras and Guatemala, and it is giving the working men of the West India Islands wages beyond what they can obtain anywhere else in the world. Much of the development which is now going on in this part of the world comes from the banana; and the future of these countries is bright through the increase of the consumption of bananas abroad. Their use is growing by leaps and bounds in the United States, and they are now making their way into the thickly populated countries of Europe as well.

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